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*History of the Jews in America: from the Period of the Discovery of the New World to the Present Time.* By PETER WIERNIK. (New York: The Jewish Press Publishing Company. 1912. Pp. xxiv, 449.)

IN the present volume the writer proposes to give a history of the Jews not only in the United States but on the whole American continent. To do anything like justice to so important and so large a subject, would require years of study and of careful research. This the author does not pretend to have done but tells us frankly in his preface that his work has been compiled in large measure from the publications of the American Jewish Historical Society and from the Jewish *Encyclopedia*.

The book is therefore in no sense a scholar's history, yet despite its many shortcomings it is a useful work, presenting to the public a considerable number of facts and data concerning the history of the Jews on American soil, arranged in logical order so as to make a fairly connected narrative.

Unfortunately however, Mr. Wiernik assumes that the volumes from which his compilation has been made contain all available material on the subject, and that because he could find no published essay in connection with the history of certain states, there were, therefore, no Jews in those parts. For this reason that part of his work which deals with the largest area of the United States is covered by some twenty pages only, and the activity of Jews in connection with the War of 1812 and the Mexican War is dismissed with about two pages, though considerable material exists on both these topics.

Broadly speaking, the author divides his book into three parts; the first, opening with the Spanish and Portuguese Period, covers twenty-eight pages, and deals with the participation of Jews in the discovery of the New World, their settlements in Mexico, Brazil, the West Indies, and finally their settlement in New York and the English colonies. This is followed by a short chapter on the services of Jews in the Revolution, which covers some seven pages, unfortunately omitting some important names while dismissing others with but two or three lines, and in conclusion there is a short discussion of religious liberty, an account of the Jews in the early days of the republic and their service in the War of 1812.

The second portion, named the German Period, includes the Jewish settlements in the Mississippi Valley, the Middle West, and the Pacific Coast, followed by a most interesting account of the Jewish Reform Movement. Some twenty-five pages are devoted to the Jews in connection with the Civil War and this portion concludes with an account of the Jews of the United States from the end of that struggle down to 1880. The rest of the book is devoted largely to the Russian Period of Immigration.

Throughout the work one is struck by a lack of historical perspective, which becomes more evident as the reader proceeds. Contemporary

events and personages with whom the author possibly has personal acquaintance, loom up in a magnitude entirely out of proportion to more important events and worthies of the past. By way of illustration, the account of the Jews in the American Revolution covers but seven pages, in which the notable career of Francis Salvador, a Jewish member of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina, is dismissed with three lines, while considerable space is allotted to the Roumanian question, the Hay note, the Kishinev massacre, and to contemporary Yiddish writers little known even to the general Jewish public, but who are often given an entire page of biography.

The reader is apt to get the general impression that the Jew in America is really the Russian or possibly the Slavonic Jew. To him more space is given than to others, and more important still, he is more sharply focused, so that we almost feel that the author's real purpose was to give an account on the Slavonic Jew in America, and that the rest of the book is largely by way of introduction.

It would have been preferable had the author drawn a sharp distinction between the Jew as a religious entity and the Jew as an American citizen. We cannot admit that a long list of the names of synagogues and their founders constitutes a history of the Jews in America, any more than an account of a number of Catholic churches organized by Irishmen would constitute a history of the Irish in America. A small group of Jews, whose religious affiliations may be slight, may possibly have been more influential in American affairs than even a large group of strictly religious observers. It is a mistake therefore to give minute accounts of the founding and founders of synagogues, many of which have been of small importance even locally, and to permit these accounts to take up more space than events of wider scope. In relation to the country at large, far more important than a list of synagogues and rabbis, is bringing out strikingly the importance of the Jew as an economic factor, his influence in trade and commerce, in science and art, and his recognition in the professions and other walks of life.

The chapter dealing with the Jew in the arts, in the professions, and in science, for instance, should therefore be among the most important in the book. It is given about ten pages in all. Instead of mentioning the names of Da Ponte, Strakosch, Grau, and Conried, who did so much for the entire American public in developing music, in introducing and maintaining grand opera in America, none of these names are even mentioned, nor are their achievements referred to; on the other hand we are given quite a long list of names of Yiddish actors and actresses with the dates of their birth and often of their arrival in America.

Mr. Wiernik deserves commendation for his sincere effort to tell the story of the Jew in America in the form of a complete narrative. His work will be useful for presenting many interesting facts in Jewish history heretofore known to students only, and in showing that, in the older states at least, the Jew is by no means a newcomer but has been a

pioneer from the start. While the book is perhaps only a newspaper man's compilation, it has considerable value in giving the first complete narrative of the coming of the Russian Jew, of his development on American soil, and in preserving data concerning Russian and Yiddish writers and rabbis whose names might otherwise be forgotten. From that point of view it is a distinct contribution, but from a broader point of view the history of the Jew in America still remains to be written.

LEON HÜHNER.

*New England and New France: Contrasts and Parallels in Colonial History.* By JAMES DOUGLAS, LL.D. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1913. Pp. x, 560.)

DR. DOUGLAS has given us, on the whole, an interesting and instructive book. It is not, as some might presume from its rather inclusive title, a mere reiteration of those general contrasts between the institutions of New England and New France which Parkman, Fiske, and others set before us so vividly a generation ago. The aim of the author has not been to give a connected narrative of events in either region, nor yet to compare their respective political and social institutions from every point of view. The volume is really a collection of essays, each complete in itself, but all of them dealing, nevertheless, with topics which are more or less closely related. Some of the matters which Dr. Douglas has selected for discussion have not hitherto received their due share of attention at the hands of historians, or at least have not been avowedly approached from a comparative standpoint. That is why various chapters of the book, notably those dealing with the Status of Women in New England and New France and Slavery in New England and New France have some real and permanent value.

Throughout the greater part of his volume the author has depended altogether on printed and tolerably accessible sources of information. His knowledge of the printed materials for the study of French-Canadian history is comprehensive, and his judgment as to the relative value of these materials is uncommonly shrewd. The chapter on Some of the Sources of the History of New France affords ample evidence of this. On the other hand the book contains equally abundant proof that the writer has yet to make an intimate acquaintance with the great masses of manuscript which lie in the archives at Quebec and Ottawa. No historian of to-day can expect to give us much that is new, or to vouchsafe opinions with any claim of finality, unless he first takes upon himself the drudgery of exploring a part at least of these literary catacombs. Dr. Douglas, of course, makes no claims to originality either in narrative or opinion; but he does command various other qualifications which must give his book an appeal to many readers. He is a son of Old Quebec and a very loyal son. He has known the place and the people from his boyhood, and his interest in both has deepened with the years. No one can read the author's chapter entitled "A Glimpse of the Past reflected